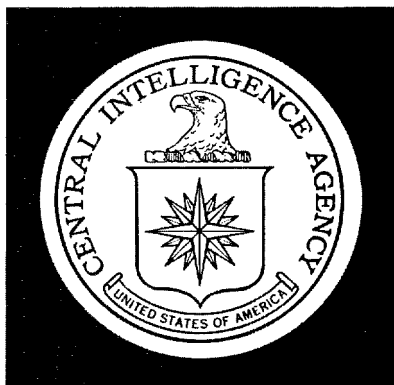


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INTELLIGENCE

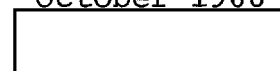
Intelligence Memorandum

RECENT ACTIVITIES IN NORTH VIETNAM

(21-27 OCTOBER 1968)

Top Secret

October 1968



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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY
Directorate of Intelligence
29 October 1968

INTELLIGENCE MEMORANDUM

Recent Activities in North Vietnam
(21-27 October 1968)

Summary

The visual indicators of enemy supply movements in the Panhandle continued to reflect traffic at the low levels of the past few weeks. It is now evident, however, that much of the apparent decline is due to disruptions from flooding as well as the poor weather that hampered aerial observation.

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North Vietnam's air defense capability continues to be improved. A new airfield is being constructed near Hanoi, and improvements continued to be made on existing airfields. Czechoslovak 30-mm anti-aircraft guns have also been observed for the first time in the Haiphong area. If these weapons are imported in quantity, they would improve sharply North Vietnam's defensive capabilities against low-flying aircraft.

Construction on North Vietnam's rail lines continued to enhance enemy logistical capabilities

Note: This memorandum was produced solely by CIA. It was prepared jointly by the Office of Economic Research and the Office of Current Intelligence and was coordinated with the Director's Special Assistant for Vietnamese Affairs.

Repairs have begun on the Viet Tri Bridge, which has been interdicted since mid-1966. Restoration of this bridge will permit through rail service on the Lao Cai line. Additional improvements to the Lao Cai line have been made at Yen Bai. A new rail/highway bridge is being built at Ninh Binh. The completion of a new rail spur in Haiphong has improved cargo handling at the port. Construction of the uncompleted Kep-Hon Gai rail line has accelerated after a lull of several months.

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South of the 20th Parallel

Flooding

1. The sharp declines in logistics activity noted in mid-October that could not be properly evaluated at that time now appear to have been in part the result of disruptions caused by localized flooding in the Panhandle. Disruption to highway transportation is apparent [REDACTED]

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[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
Song Lau River, eleven miles north of Thanh Hoa, showed 67 trucks backed up on the north bank of the river waiting to use a highway ferry in lieu of flooded highway bridges. The present extent of the flooding is unknown [REDACTED]

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[REDACTED]
the flooding had not abated. Most of the observable damage was to highway bridges, and there was little [REDACTED] disruption of rail or maritime activities.

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Truck Traffic

2. Truck sightings [REDACTED] continued to be well below the weekly average noted since 1 April, despite a sharp increase in the number of sorties flown. Poor weather continued to hamper aerial observation, and unquantifiable pilot reports of truck sightings suggest that truck activity may have been substantially greater than that reflected in the tabulation below:

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	<u>Trucks</u>			
	<u>Sighted</u>	<u>De- stroyed</u>	<u>Damaged</u>	<u>Effective Losses ^{a/}</u>
This week b/ (21-27 Oct)	158	35	17	30
Last week (14-20 Oct)	152	24	13	21
Weekly average (since 1 Apr)	597	110	67	99

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b. Preliminary data.

3. Truck sightings were most prevalent on coastal routes and on inland routes just south of Vinh. [redacted] trucks and unidentified vehicles on Route 1A several miles south of Dong Hoi; on Routes 1082, 110, and several coastal feeder routes near Ha Tinh; and on Route 82 south of Vinh. A seven-vehicle convoy was sighted and then destroyed on Route 74 a short distance north of Vinh. About 35 trucks were detected [redacted] [redacted] Route 72 several miles south of the 19th Parallel.

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Watercraft

4. [redacted] watercraft activity in the Panhandle continued at a level well below the average weekly sightings noted since 1 April 1968. In addition, a decrease in activity on two key

waterways just above the 19th Parallel -- the Song
Dua and the Kenh Me -- was apparent

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Rail Construction

10. Repair work has begun on the Viet Tri railroad/highway bridge that has been interdicted since mid-1966. Repair of this bridge will restore through rail service on the Hanoi-Lao Cai rail line over the Song Lo River. Two new piers are now being built at the site of the destroyed bridge. The presence of three floating work platforms, a tug boat, and a floating crane in the area suggests that a high priority has been assigned to the project.

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The North Vietnamese now rely on rail and highway ferries and on a highway cable bridge for river crossings at this site.

11. Construction activity has also been noted on the Lao Cai rail line in the vicinity of Yen Bai. A new rail by-pass around the southern end of the Yen Bai rail yard and a new road-to-rail transshipment point near the yard have been completed. A new rail by-pass bridge has been built ten miles northwest of Yen Bai, even though the main bridge there is serviceable. In addition, two short rail spurs have been constructed south of Yen Bai.

12. The completion of a new rail spur has improved the cargo-handling capability at one of Haiphong port's main open storage areas. The spur leads into a mall south of the main docks where supplies have been stockpiled because of congestion at dockside storage areas. Heavy construction materials apparently are now being removed via the new spur.

13. Construction of the uncompleted Kep-Hon Gai rail line has been accelerated after a lull of several months. Two short bridges, a causeway, and several rail spurs have recently been completed about 30 miles west of Hon Gai. One spur connects the main line with a transshipment area on the estuary of the Song Da Bach. The remaining spurs apparently will serve coal mines in the nearby hills. Several small dams have been built southeast of Kep to alleviate standing water problems and to control flooding. Work is still stalled, however, as a result of floods on a considerable portion of the line southeast of Kep. Half of the bridges on the 66-mile Kep-Hon Gai line have not been completed and more than eight miles of road-bed have not been started.

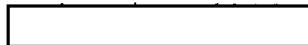
14. A new rail/highway bridge is under construction at Ninh Binh on the Hanoi-Vinh rail line. Several steel frames for use in forming large concrete caissons as well as other construction materials were noted [redacted] near the bridge site. The original bridge at this site had been destroyed early in the Rolling Thunder program, but a large railroad pontoon bridge, a highway pontoon bridge, and railroad ferries were used to maintain traffic flows.

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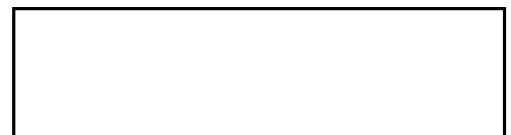
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New Rail Spur at Haiphong Open Storage Area

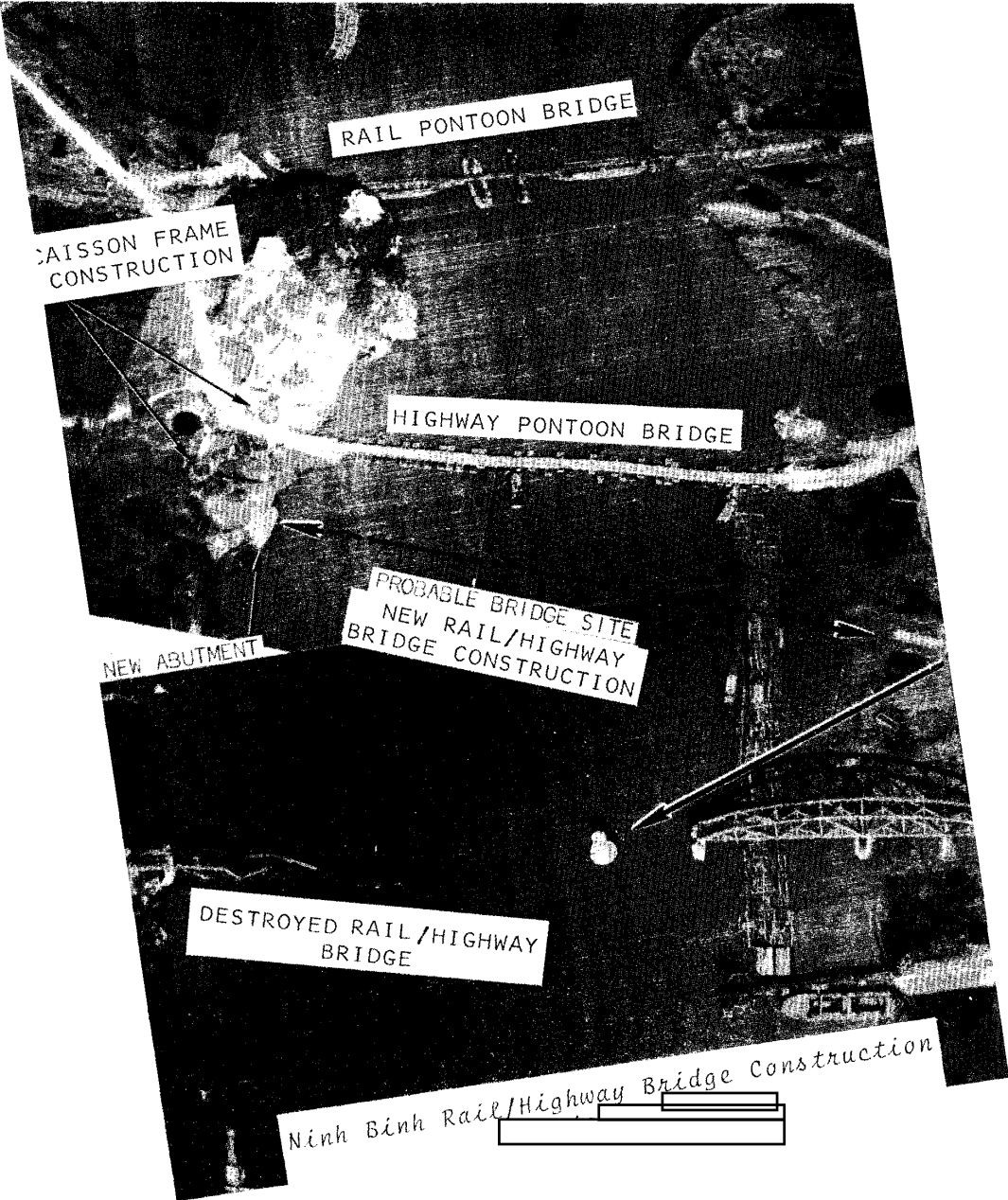


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Airfield Construction

15. A new airfield under construction near Xuan Mai, 18 miles southwest of Hanoi, has been detected

[redacted] A 7,400-foot runway is under construction, and about one-fourth of the runway has been filled and graded. [redacted]

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[redacted] The new airfield site presents difficult construction problems; flat, marshy ground with much standing water must be drained and filled, and a low ridge-line composed of hard rock near the runway must be removed by blasting. The location of this airfield suggests that it is intended to protect the capital's southwestern flank or to support Laotian operations.

16. The North Vietnamese also continued to improve their existing jet-capable airfields. At Haiphong/Kien An, resurfacing appears to be completed on a large parking apron and has begun on a small parking apron. At Yen Bai, work continues on an aircraft dispersal area which has already been connected by road to dispersed parking sites in the hills north of the airfield. At Kep Airfield, 22 vehicles and other pieces of construction equipment were recently noted.

Air Defense

17. A small number of 30-mm antiaircraft weapons of Czechoslovak manufacture have been observed in the Haiphong area for the first time. This weapon is similar to a new model Soviet 23-mm gun recently supplied by the Soviets to North Vietnam. Both the 23-mm and the 30-mm guns are more mobile and faster firing than the 37-mm weapon that currently predominates in North Vietnam. The addition of large numbers of these guns would significantly upgrade North Vietnam's air defense capability against low-altitude attack aircraft.

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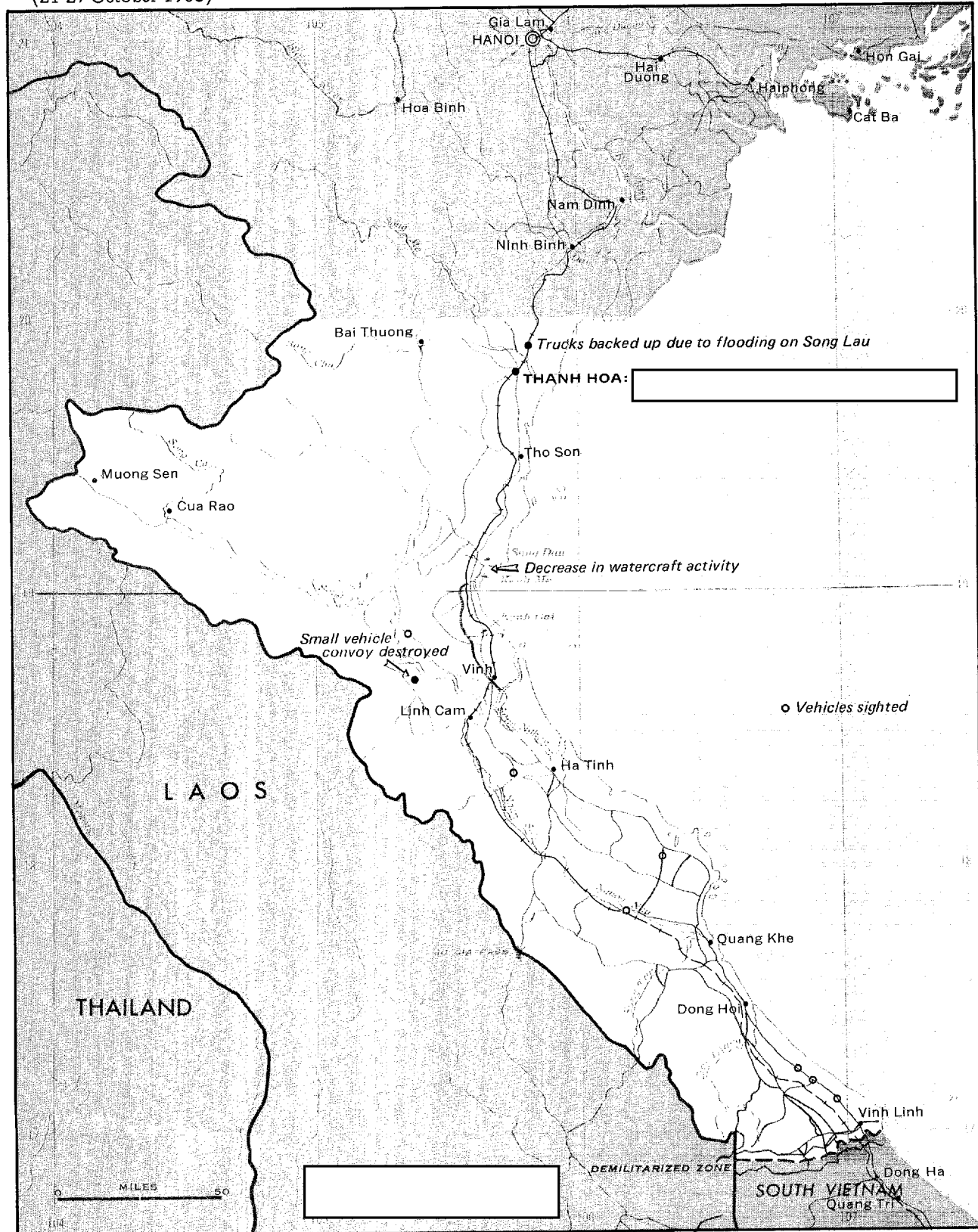
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Trade and Aid

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21. North Vietnam continued to make contacts with Free World countries for current or postwar economic development. A North Vietnamese trade delegation is in Paris to exhibit handicraft and forestry products at a Paris Merchants' Exhibition. Hanoi reportedly has also asked the Japan-Vietnam Trade Association in Tokyo to consider providing North Vietnam with a variety of light industrial plants and training of technicians for maintenance of these plants. Hanoi would consider opening negotiations after receiving firm proposals from the Association.

ACTIVITIES IN NORTH VIETNAM SOUTH OF THE 20TH PARALLEL
(21-27 October 1968)

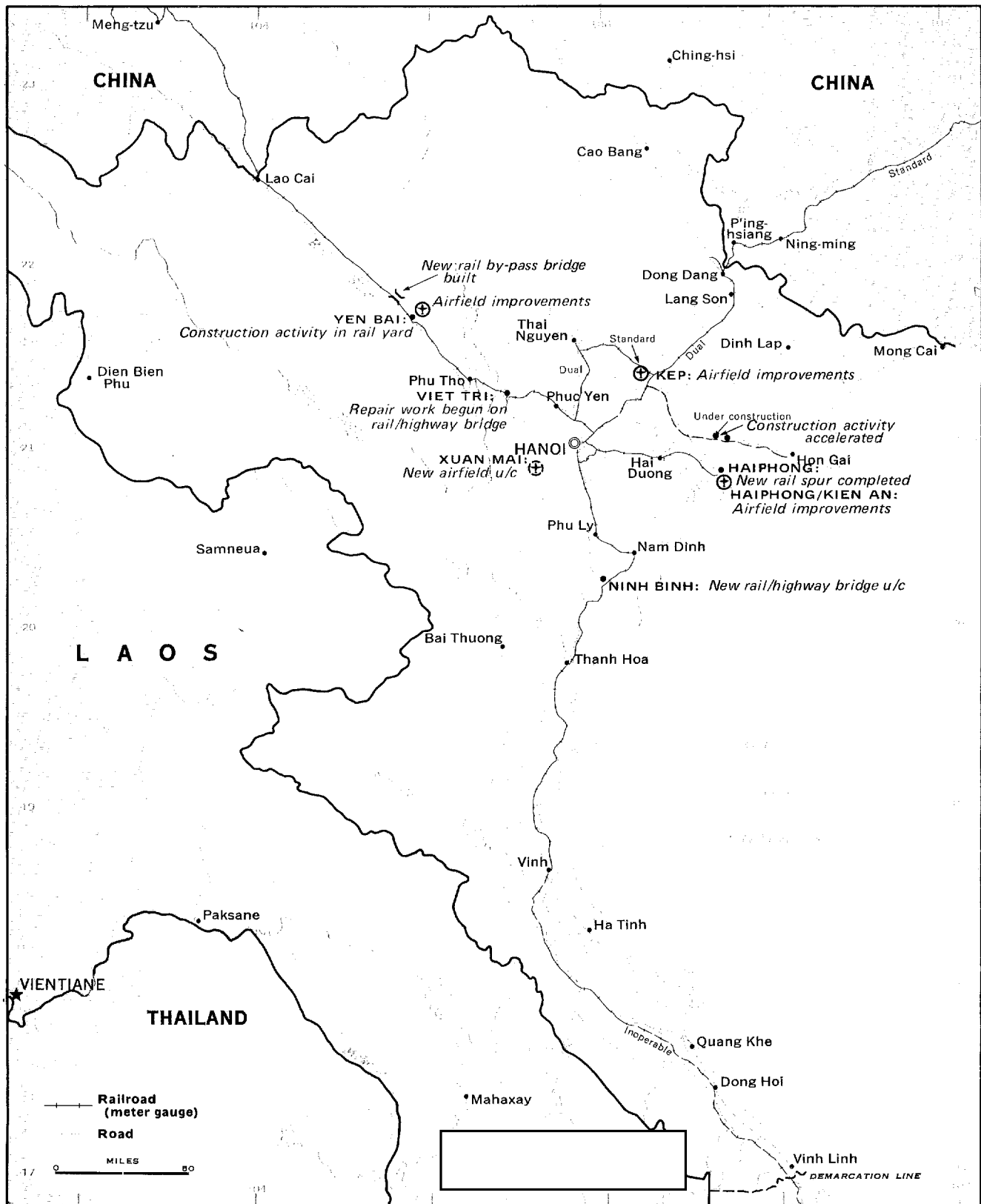


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ACTIVITIES IN NORTH VIETNAM NORTH OF THE 20TH PARALLEL
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